(a) whether Government has lifted the ban on export of wheat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether lifting of ban has resulted in reduction in rising prices;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the further steps Government proposes to take in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) In pursuance of the Empowered Group of Ministers decision dated 5/3/2009, the Government had vide Notification No. 115-(RE-2009)/2004-2009 dated 3rd July, 2009 lifted the ban on export of wheat, for export of 3 lakh MTs each through MMTC, PEC and STC upto 31/3/2010. However, keeping in view the progress of Monsoon and the need to conserve foodgrain stocks within the country, the decision was reconsidered by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and the permission allowed for export of wheat through MMTC, STC and PEC was withdrawn vide Notification No. 117(RE-2009)/2004-2009 dated 13 July, 2009.

(c) and (d) The lifting of ban vide Notification No. 115-(RE-2009)/2004-2009 dated 3rd July, 2009, or the withdrawal of export permission vide Notification No. 117(RE-2009)/2004-2009 dated 13 July, 2009 did not have any impact on domestic market price situation.

(e) The Government is regularly monitoring the situation and would take appropriate need based measure.

Upgradation of Bilimora-Chikhli-Vansda-Waghai-Ahwa-Chinchli road in Gujarat

*370. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gujarat Government has submitted a proposal for upgradation of Bilimora-Chikhli-Vansda-Waghai-Ahwa-ChinchliRoad;

(b) if so, the current status of the proposal; and

(c) by when the proposal is likely to be approved?

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) This Ministry has not received any such proposal from Government of Gujarat for declaration as National Highways. Due to resource constrants, priority is being given for development of roads already declared as National Highways instead of declaring more roads as National Highways and as such, there is no proposal to declare any new National Highway in Gujarat at present.

Joblessness due to global economic meltdown

*371. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of job-seekers in the whole country as per records of the employment exchanges in different States of the country;

(b) among these job-seekers, how many are having professional qualifications;

(c) the number of persons turned jobless during 2008-09 and 2009-10 on account of global economic meltdown and recession; and

(d) the course of action Government proposes to pursue to rehabilitate those who lost jobs in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI HARISH RAWAT): (a) to (d) The total number of jobseekers (all of whom may not necessarily be unemployed) registered with employment exchanges as on 30-04-2009 was 384.9 lakh. As per the latest data available, the number of job-seekers possessing professional qualifications comprising graduate and post-graduate degrees in engineering, medicine, veterinary science, agriculture, law, education and others was 17.6 lakh as on 31.12.2006.

No comprehensive survey/study has been conducted so far, to assess the number of persons rendered jobless during 2008-09 and 2009-10 on account of global economic meltdown and recession. However, two quarterly surveys in quick succession on the effect of global economic meltdown on employment in India have been conducted by Labour Bureau, attached to this Ministry. According to its first report on "Effect of Economic Slowdown on Employment in India," which is based on a sample survey of 2,581 units in 20 centres conducted for the period October-December 2008, there was a decrease in employment of about 5 lakh workers during the quarter. The second survey conducted by the Labour Bureau for the period January to March 2009 covering 3,192 units in 21 centres, however, indicated marginal improvement in some of the selected sectors with employment rising by about 2.8 lakh during that quarter.

A sample survey conducted by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry for 402 exporting units revealed job losses (direct and indirect) to the tune of 1,09,513 persons during August 2008 to mid-January 2009. Another sample study conducted earlier (for the period August-October 2008) by the Department of Commerce for 121 export-related companies belonging to several sectors, primarily employment-oriented sectors such as textiles including garments, leather, engineering, gems and jewellery, handicrafts, food and food processing, minerals, marine products has revealed loss of jobs of 65,507.

The action taken by the Government to mitigate the adverse impact of economic slowdown includes three stimulus packages, various measures announced by the Reserve Bank of India, enlargement in implementation of the 'Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana' wherein the insured worker and his family are entitled to about 50% of wages upto a period of one year (as against 6 months earlier) and medical benefits in case of loss of job. These measures seek to prevent large scale job losses and wage cuts and to mitigate the income loss on account of loss of employment. Government of India has also been implementing various employment generation programmes both for men and women notably National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP); Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY); Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) which helped mitigate the impact of the meltdown.

Policy for maintenance of existing roads by NHAI

*372. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is preparing a policy for maintenance of existing roads during their four laning/six laning by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI);